

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

by Flex Legal

Flex Legal Network Inc. is a company that matches experienced freelance lawyers with other lawyers, law firms and in-house legal departments to assist with overflow work on an as-needed basis. Flex Legal is managed by Erin Cowling (Founder & CEO), Ella Fischer-Slack (Operations Manager) and Mel Kalcher (Marketing Manager). While Flex Legal is headquartered in Toronto, its 90 freelancers are living and working across Canada. Accordingly, Flex Legal acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. With freelancers working and living coast to coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the Inuit, Métis, and First Nations people that call this land home.

Flex Legal has committed to drafting and implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan to guide us on our reconciliation journey. In particular we have reviewed, and will be addressing, the following "Calls to Action" from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Report and Calls to Action.

CTA #27 We call upon the Federation of Law Societies of Canada to ensure that lawyers receive appropriate cultural competency training, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

CTA #28 We call upon law schools in Canada to require all law students to take a course in Aboriginal people and the law, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and antiracism.

Business and Reconciliation

CTA #92. We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
- ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

We have drafted this Reconciliation Action Plan together as a team and have committed to reviewing this plan annually and revising or updating it as necessary.

While we recognize that we are only a small business, we also know we can and must do our part in this process. Below we have focused on concrete actions we can take as individuals and as a team so we can use the influence that we have as lawyers, legal professionals, business owners and settlers or newcomers.

FLEX LEGAL CATEGORIES OF ACTIONS

REFLECTION & LEARNING GOALS:

As settlers and newcomers, we have the responsibility to learn the truth of the history and ongoing impacts of colonialism and cultural genocide on Indigenous peoples and communities in Canada.

We will learn this truth by:

ACTION	DATE	WHO
Read at least one book, journal article etc. written by an Indigenous person about their lived experience annually	By December 31 (annually)	All
Participate in at least one online course or webinar about Truth and Reconciliation ex. The Path by the Canadian Bar Association	By December 31 (annually)	All
Review the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	By November 30, 2023	All

GIVING GOALS:

We can use our influence as a profitable small business and make donations to organizations and charities that support Indigenous peoples.

ACTION	DATE	WHO
Research potential charities and other Indigenous services that are in need of financial aid	By December 15, 2023	Ella
We will review our budget to determine the amount to allocate to such groups for the following fiscal year.	Each December	Erin

SPENDING/SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS BUSINESS GOALS:

As a business that hires, engages, and purchases services and / or products from others, we will review our annual spending and plan to support Indigenous owned businesses, vendors, and contractors and use our influence to promote such businesses.

ACTION	DATE	WHO
Research all possible Indigenous businesses, vendors and contractors.	Whenever a spending decision is made or a service contract is signed	Erin
Research and promote Indigenous owned-law firms or law-related businesses on an ongoing basis	Once per Quarter	Mel

TERRITORIAL RECOGNITIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

We recognize the importance of territorial recognition and acknowledgement as a way that we can insert an awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life.

ACTION	DATE	WHO
Offering a land acknowledgement at the beginning of our public events (accompanied by an action) as well as on our website and in our email signatures.	Ongoing	All
Encourage our freelancers and clients to review the history of land upon which they live and work and read any treaty that may be associated with that land	February 2024	Erin

JOIN US:

This reconciliation action plan is our strategy to foster meaningful, sustainable change by working as a team to show our commitment to Indigenous peoples and communities. While it is Flex Legal's plan, we believe it is a foundation upon which all small and large businesses in Canada can build on to create authentic relationships based on truth, cooperation, and integrity.

For progress to be made, we must all work hard to take actionable steps that foster equity and accountability. This is the starting point of Flex Legal's journey of reconciliation and we expect to adjust as we move forward. We encourage you to join us.